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Georgia Southern University Athletics



Women's Golf Season Preview: Eagles Eager to Show Their Depth
The Eagles open the campaign at the Pirate Collegiate Classic Sept. 23-24.

Marc Gignac

Women's Golf

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STATESBORO – The Georgia Southern women's golf team will look to take the next step as they open the season with consecutive tournaments next week.

Now in its fifth season of existence, the Eagles have taken third at the Sun Belt Championship in each of the last two years and has placed fourth or higher in three seasons. Not bad for a fledging program, but the Eagles and head coach [Emily Kuhfeld](#) are hungry for more.

Georgia Southern returns six letterwinners from a season ago, including [Ella Ofstedahl](#), the reigning Sun Belt Championship medalist. Juniors [Julianna Collett](#) and [Sarah Noonan](#) both return after having been in the lineup for the Sun Belt tourney. Noonan played in nine events, and Collett competed in seven.

The sophomore class of [Savanah Satterfield](#), [Emma Bell](#) and [Kaysie Harrelson](#) have improved their games, which they demonstrated with strong results during the summer. Freshman [Alberte Thuesen](#), who helped the Danish National Team to the European Girls Championship last summer, and sophomore [Madison Heideman](#), a transfer from Florida Atlantic, are the newcomers to the program.

With just one day between the final round of the Pirate Collegiate Classic and the practice round of the Lady Paladin Invitational, the Eagles will travel directly from the first event to the second. Qualifying for the first two events was tight, which is a great sign for the 2019-20 season. Ofstedahl, Noonan, Satterfield, Bell and Thuesen made the lineup.

"Qualifying for the first time in history of program was really competitive and so close," said Kuhfeld. "Usually, there has been a clear separation and the girls maybe didn't feel as pushed as they do now. That's a great sign for our program."

The program has transitioned from its infancy and saw its first four-year senior, [Ansley Bowman](#), graduate last spring. She helped build and ingrain the culture that Ofstedahl and the other upperclassman will continue to nurture. The strong culture has helped Kuhfeld, assistant coach [Michael Butler](#) and the Eagles develop a new practice philosophy, which has seen positive results.

"We've tried to foster a really independent team that owns their own game and understands where they are, where they want to be and what it's going to take to get there," said Kuhfeld. "They know what they need to do to improve and how to take those steps. They know each of them is doing what it takes to get them individually better, and they know that doing so is going to make the team better."

The Eagles play most of their qualifying rounds at Georgia Southern University Course. They have always known it was a difficult course, but that sentiment was

reinforced last spring when they hosted The Strutter Gus Invitational there. The Eagles won the tournament by 20 strokes, and only four individuals shot rounds of par or better. Shooting solid qualifying rounds there should give the Eagles added confidence when they get into tournament rounds.

"GSU is one of the toughest courses we play anywhere in general so to me the qualifying scores - if somebody shoots a 72 out there, that's almost a 70 anywhere else we play with very few exceptions," said Kuhfeld.

This 2019-20 team has depth, and the competition to get into the lineup each week will only benefit the Eagles. Improving on consecutive third-place finishes at the Sun Belt Championship is certainly within their reach.

"We have a lot of potential," said Kuhfeld. "It's about who is going to get it done and be able to perform consistently, and it could be a number of them, which is really exciting for our program."

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